United Nations A/65/227

General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 August 2010

Original: English

Sixty-fifth session
Item 69 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Draft programme of activities for the International Year for People of African Descent

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/169 and focuses on a draft programme of activities to mark the International Year for People of African Descent.

* A/65/150.

10-47674 (E) 070910

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 64/169, the General Assembly proclaimed the year beginning on 1 January 2011 the International Year for People of African Descent, with a view to strengthening national actions and regional and international cooperation for the benefit of people of African descent in relation to their full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, their participation and integration in all political, economic, social and cultural aspects of society, and the promotion of a greater knowledge of and respect for their diverse heritage and culture.

2. In resolution 64/169, the General Assembly encouraged Member States, the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates and existing resources, and civil society to make preparations for and identify possible initiatives that could contribute to the success of the Year. It requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session a report containing a draft programme of activities for the Year, taking into account the views and recommendations of Member States, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent of the Human Rights Council and other relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as appropriate.

3. General Assembly resolution 64/169 was adopted without a vote, indicating the wide consensus in the international community regarding the importance of an International Year for People of African Descent.

II. Implementation of resolution 64/169

4. In compliance with paragraph 3 of resolution 64/169, on 18 February 2010 notes verbales were sent to Member States and the other parties with which the Secretary-General was requested to consult in preparing a draft agenda of activities for the International Year, inviting their views on the matter. A follow-up note verbale was sent on 19 May 2010. Contributions were received from six Member States, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent and the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat.

5. The present report contains summaries of the contributions received in response to the notes verbales. The report concludes with a draft agenda of activities that takes into account the views and recommendations of the parties referred to in paragraph 3 of resolution 64/169, while being mindful of the stipulation in paragraph 2 of the resolution that specialized agencies within the United Nations system should make preparations for and identify possible initiatives that could contribute to the success of the Year, within their respective mandates and existing resources.

III. Views and recommendations received from Member States

Algeria

[Original: French]
[5 May 2010]

6. Algeria is planning to organize a number of events and activities during 2011 to mark the International Year for People of African Descent.

7. One of the aims of these events is to facilitate the integration of people of African descent into Algerian society. Artists and intellectuals from several, mainly African, countries will take part.

8. The programme of planned activities and events is as follows:

(a) Dance and choreography:

(i) International festival of traditional dance;

(ii) Arab-African cultural folk dance festival;

(iii) International cultural festival of modern dance;

(b) Music:

(i) Timgad international cultural festival;

(ii) Tergui local music and song festival;

(iii) International "Diwan" music festival Djemila international festival;

(iv) International festival of Andalusian and early music;

(v) International jazz music festival;

(vi) Abelsse-tin Hinan, Ahaggar international arts festival;

(vii) Samaa Sufi international music festival;

(viii) Ahellil national cultural festival;

(ix) Aid Sebeiba local cultural festival;

(c) Comic strips and literature:

(i) International cultural comic strip festival;

(ii) International festival of young people's literature and books;

(iii) International cultural book festival: Algiers international book fair;

(d) Plastic arts:

(i) International cultural festival of miniatures and decorative arts;

(ii) International cultural festival of contemporary pictorial art.

9. As part of the activities planned for 2011, Algeria will host a major event: "Tlemcen, capital of Islamic culture", intended to promote the cultural wealth of Islamic civilization and its contribution to other civilizations. The project will feature cultural and religious festivities, including cultural weeks of Islamic

countries, thematic symposiums and conferences, theatre, poetry, exhibitions, traditional music and dance.

10. This event will provide an opportunity for all Muslim countries to promote the cultural wealth of Islamic civilization. Muslim African countries will present the diversity of Africa's Islamic heritage and encourage promotion of the culture of the African Muslim population.

11. Furthermore, as part of its contribution to cultural projects launched by the African Union to conserve and enhance the African cultural heritage, Algeria will be home to the future Great African Museum, which will be a platform for new information and communications technologies that balance the requirements of museums and the preservation of cultural identities.

Brazil

[Original: English]
[9 June 2010]

12. Brazil attaches great importance to the Slave Route Project, launched by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1994. Brazil believes the project should be expanded and further promoted, given its relevance for the re-establishment of historical accounts of slavery and the slave trade.

13. Brazil also deems it important to give additional support to research for and publishing of printed and audio-visual material related to the history of peoples of African descent in the places to which they were forcibly displaced.

14. It is high time to publicize the struggle and strategies of resistance of populations that were victims of slavery and the slave trade. It is important to recognize the role played by these people in the building of culturally rich and diversified societies and to acknowledge that peoples of African descent represented the base of the labour force in a complex social and economic system, the effects of which continue to endure. As a result these people and their descendents are at a disadvantage with regard to the enjoyment of rights and opportunities compared with other ethnic or social groups.

15. Such an initiative would represent a step forward in the understanding of the historical formation of various countries which, despite the longstanding consequences of slavery and the slave trade, have come to regard the promotion of equality as an essential value for democracy, pluralism and intercultural dialogue.

16. The proposed project could be implemented either as an extension of the Slave Route Project, or through the creation of a group of experts tasked to launch a publication on the topic. In either case, Brazil proposes the preparation and publication of, inter alia, maps, educational materials, films and public exhibitions on the topic.

17. This informative material should aim at portraying the actual social, economic and political situation of peoples of African descent and at stimulating debate on discriminatory patterns inherited from slavery. It would also foster dialogue and promote inclusion in modern societies, based on a shared sense of racial and ethnic equality.

18. Brazil also proposes the holding of a world conference on people of African descent, to discuss their historic contribution to the creation of new societies in the places to which they were forcibly brought and how their contribution is represented in different areas, such as politics, the labour market and the media. Brazil believes that such a conference should occur in parallel with an arts festival comprising dance and music performances, theatre, films and art exhibitions, which would increase the visibility to the initiative.

Ecuador

[Original: Spanish]
[7 July 2010]

19. Ecuador intends to carry out the following activities in the context of the International Year for People of African Descent:

(a) Dissemination of information:

(i) Presentation of the International Year at the national level, throughout the country through a campaign using various communications media;

(ii) Awareness-raising days focusing on economic, social and cultural issues relating to Ecuadoreans of African descent, organized by universities, Government institutions and non-governmental organizations, with the assistance of experts, researchers (of African and non-African descent, academics, nationals and foreigners, and men and women), campaigners for Ecuadoreans of African descent throughout the country and members of civil society;

(iii) Publications;

(iv) Creation and publication of a logo for the International Year;

(b) Participation:

(i) Involvement of the Ecuadorean population of African descent in the preparation of laws that are fundamental to their daily lives, such as the mining law, the water law, the equality law, the property law, the territorial boundaries law, etc.;

(ii) Analysis and consensus between Government institutions and Ecuadoreans of African descent in order to establish affirmative action measures in areas that are considered to require immediate intervention (employment and education, for example);

(iii) Contribution to development of measures to establish jurisprudence related to the crimes of racism, racial discrimination and racist hatred;

(iv) Regional participation of Government representatives, social organizations of Ecuadoreans of African descent and civil society in technical cooperation programmes in the field and exchanges of experience in countries where similar processes are under way (e.g. Brazil);

(v) Education and training on international instruments related to racism and racial discrimination provided to social organizations and civil society;

(c) Establishment of public policies:

In this area there is already a road map contained in the plurinational plan against racial discrimination and ethnic and cultural exclusion. The following actions are considered a priority:

(i) Economic rights:

- Affirmative action relating to employment;
- Affirmative action in social programmes related to economic inclusion;
- Productive projects;

(ii) Social rights:

- Housing;
- Legalization of housing plots;

(iii) Territorial rights:

- Granting of legal title to collective territory;
- Creation of constituencies for territories of indigenous peoples and people of African descent;
- Prior consultation;

(iv) Education programme:

- Production of intercultural texts;
- A quota plan for peoples and nationalities in the middle and higher education systems;
- A grants programme to access higher and postgraduate education;
- Incentives for Ecuadorean researchers of African descent;

(v) Cultural:

- Exchanges among leaders of the organizational process for Ecuadoreans of African descent at the regional level (Latin America).

Guatemala

[Original: Spanish]
[15 April 2010]

20. The Presidential Commission against Discrimination and Racism against Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala intends to carry out the following activities:

(a) An international seminar on the International Year, with the intention to submit to the Presidency a request for recognition of and respect for the contribution of the Garifuna people, and obtain an agreement between the different actors aimed at capacity-building for the Garifuna people;

(b) Activities with Garifuna women aimed at generating productive capacity;

(c) Dissemination of information and educational activities among diverse sectors of the population.

21. The Presidential Secretariat for Planning and Programming intends to carry out the following:

(a) Create a permanent forum to use history to raise the self-esteem and sense of belonging of Guatemalans of African descent, and to create a repository for the real history of this population;

(b) Promote an integrated development plan for the Garifuna people, working in a team made up of representatives of Garinagu organizations and experts from the General Directorate for Cultural Development and Strengthening of Cultures.

22. The Ministry of Culture and Sport intends to carry out the following:

(a) Intercultural dialogues;

(b) A project on developing the Garifuna culture;

(c) Forums on diversity and inclusion;

(d) Strengthening the Garifuna language through research and linguistic diagnostics;

(e) Dissemination of cultural material at the national level (audio-visual, exhibitions, expo-sales and written material, among others things);

(f) In the area of non-physical cultural patrimony, strengthen the project to encourage and safeguard the Garifuna culture currently being executed by the Ministry of Culture and Sport;

(g) Promotion of music and dance, publication of literary works and diverse cultural activities in the Department of Izabal.

23. The General Directorate of Intercultural Bilingual Education is considering the following:

(a) Dissemination of the declaration of the International Year for People of African Descent in educational institutions throughout the country, especially to regions where people of African descent live;

(b) Creation of a study-grants programme for children and young people of African descent to guarantee access to education at the primary and secondary levels;

(c) Support for the creation of a study-grants programme for young people and adults of African descent to guarantee access to education at the technical and professional levels;

(d) Activities to commemorate significant dates for the country's people of African descent;

(e) Drafting of documents that strengthen the identity of students of African descent;

(f) Educational activities aimed at reducing drug addiction, similar vices and contagious diseases.

24. Activities planned by the Ministry of Culture and Sport include elements specifically directed at a particular section of the population as follows:

(a) Intercultural dialogues: the general public;

(b) Project on developing the Garifuna culture: cultural activists (women and men);

(c) Forums on diversity and inclusion: civil servants;

(d) Dissemination of expressions of culture: children and young people;

(e) Promotion of music and dance, publication of literary works and diverse cultural activities: the general public.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[25 May 2010]

25. The following are recommendations and possible initiatives that could be included in a draft programme of activities for the International Year:

(a) Legislative actions:

(i) Constitutional recognition:

- Although the political Constitution of Mexico does not recognize this social group explicitly, it clearly prohibits all forms of discrimination;
- The Constitution of the State of Oaxaca establishes, in article 16, that the law will protect Mexican communities of African descent and indigenous peoples of any other community from other states of Mexico that for any reason reside in the territory of the State of Oaxaca;
- Legislative working groups need to be created to deal with the subject and seek institutional commitment for the revision of the various state initiatives in favour of people of African descents;

(b) Actions to strengthen identity:

(i) Interculturalism: The recognition of Mexico as a multicultural nation has been a great step forward in building a democratic country. However, Mexico must continue on to interculturalism, which presupposes ending monoculturalism, accepting plurality, making all cultures equal, evaluating and reorganizing relations between cultures and peoples, and insisting on fair communication and intercultural dialogue, until a degree of solidarity and harmony has been achieved;

(ii) Self-affirmation: This will contribute to communities of African descent recognizing themselves as such, with the goal of them valuing their cultural characteristics and eliminating those stigmas that they have historically endured, such as "dark-skinned", "coast-dwellers" or foreigners;

(c) Actions to generate information: To resolve the problem of lack of statistical data, it is important to unite efforts nationally to develop studies and statistics on the problems and number of inhabitants of African descent. This

information will allow the development of specific programmes and public policies to combat the structural problems that these communities have suffered;

(d) Actions to eradicate and combat discrimination:

(i) Encourage a culture of denouncing discrimination:

- The problem of discrimination in Mexico is difficult to quantify, particularly because there are insufficient complaints related to discrimination against communities of African descent. It is therefore important to strengthen a culture of recognizing rights and denouncing their violation;

- Non-discrimination requires that the specific ethnic and cultural identity of people of African descent be legally recognized so that they are represented at the local and federal levels and have access to the economic and social rights that will allow them to develop as a people and overcome marginalization;

(ii) Education: an effective way of making the problems of people of African descent more visible is through state and municipal education and training, with the objective that these communities are recognized as subjects of law and as contributors to the history of the nation and the cultural diversity of the country;

(iii) Production and distribution of news items: Positioning the theme in the mass media will permit the implementation and follow-up of joint activities to eradicate discrimination towards, and lack of visibility of, these communities. Informative news items that are distributed to journalists will help place the theme on the national agenda;

(iv) Organization of an international seminar: International forums organized every year by the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination have allowed the professionalization of themes in the academic sphere, within civil society organizations and among individuals involved in the development of public policies. Such a forum would promote exchange of experience and information on the subject and commitments from legislative authorities.

United States of America

[Original: English]
[1 July 2010]

26. The United States of America believes that there are concrete actions and activities under way around the world and within the United Nations. For its part, the United States has begun efforts to collaborate bilaterally with both Colombia and Brazil to promote cooperation, understanding and an exchange of information (including best practices) to eliminate racial and ethnic discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity for all. The United States and Colombia signed an action plan on racial and ethnic equality earlier this year and held the first meeting of a steering committee on 4 June in Bogotá. On 20 and 21 May the United States hosted the fourth meeting of the steering group on the United States-Brazil joint action plan to eliminate racial and ethnic discrimination and promote equality in

Atlanta, Georgia. In 2011, the United States will continue to support exchanges related to these agreements that engage communities of African descent.

27. Within the United Nations system, initiatives that could be highlighted or enhanced during the Year include:

(a) UNESCO is partnering with Purdue University in April 2011 on a conference about philosophical dialogue between Africa and the Americas. The conference will bring together over 150 academics from three regions of the world for three days of discussions. The United States suggests that this conference be used to commemorate the International Year for People of African Descent;

(b) The UNESCO Youth Forum, held prior to the UNESCO General Conference, brings together young delegates from all over the world to exchange views, share experiences, reflect together and, above all, identify common concerns and problems. The seventh Forum will be held in 2011 and the United States suggests that the theme of the Forum in 2011 could be related to the International Year;

(c) The UNESCO World Heritage Programme could explore the possibility of a transboundary nomination of sites that are of outstanding universal value to people of African descent. The United States Department of State is exploring this initiative with the Department of the Interior, its partner on world heritage matters;

(d) The Forum on Minority Issues of the Human Rights Council could use its 2011 meeting to bring together academics and journalists to discuss the challenges facing people of African descent;

(e) Special attention should be paid to people of African descent on the various days that have been previously established, such as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March) and the International Day for Tolerance (16 November);

(f) The role of Goodwill Ambassador for the permanent memorial at the United Nations to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade could be highlighted through a side event or briefing at the United Nations General Assembly or Human Rights Council;

(g) The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights hosted side events on people of African descent during the Human Rights Council in 2011 highlighting the contributions of selected persons of African descent to promoting and protecting human rights around the world.

28. In addition, the United States encourages other countries, in order to ensure more effective implementation of their human rights treaty obligations and commitments, to undertake initiatives at the domestic level to combat racial discrimination. Comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation is fundamental in the fight against racial discrimination and intolerance and we encourage States to:

(a) Review existing national laws to ensure that protections against racial discrimination comply with their obligations under international human rights law;

(b) Take effective measures to ensure equal access to governmental programmes or activities, irrespective of an individual's race;

(c) Take effective measures to ensure that Government officials in the conduct of their public duties do not discriminate based on an individual's race;

(d) Take effective measures to ensure that members of racial minority groups have equal access to housing, education and employment;

(e) Encourage representation and meaningful participation of individuals, irrespective of their race, in all sectors of society, especially in Government;

(f) Undertake strong efforts to combat racial profiling, which is understood to be the invidious use of race, religion or ethnicity as a criterion in conducting stops, searches and other law enforcement investigative procedures.

IV. Views and recommendations received from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

29. Within the framework of the United Nations human rights system, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent is the central mechanism for the advancement of the rights of people of African descent. OHCHR therefore devotes considerable effort to using this mechanism to effectively implement its mandate as one of the best ways to promote real and positive change in the lives of people of African descent. Consistent with this approach, OHCHR will be carrying out the following activities to contribute to the success of the International Year for People of African Descent:

(a) OHCHR will be organizing and servicing the tenth annual session of the Working Group, which will have the International Year as its central theme. The session will take place in Geneva from 28 March to 1 April 2011, with the participation of Member States, United Nations specialized agencies and accredited representatives from civil society;

(b) OHCHR will be organizing and facilitating a country visit by the Working Group to examine the situation of people of African descent in that country;

(c) OHCHR will be organizing and facilitating a mission by the Working Group to meet with representatives of international financial institutions to promote engagement in the International Year and commitments to activities carried out in that context;

(d) OHCHR will be publishing a fact sheet containing a compilation of the conclusions and recommendations of the Working Group from all of its sessions. This publication will serve to inform all stakeholders of the outcomes of the discussions held during the sessions of the Working Group;

(e) Throughout the year, OHCHR will be organizing side events during the sessions of the Human Rights Council that will be focused on different issues relating to people of African descent;

(f) Throughout the year, OHCHR will be releasing statements and opinion pieces by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in order to raise awareness of the International Year and of the issues relevant to people of African descent;

(g) OHCHR will commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March) with an activity focused on people of African descent;

(h) OHCHR will also be implementing other activities in the context of the International Year that will be determined at a later date during the Office's planning process for 2011.

V. Views and recommendations received from the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

30. In 2011, the International Year for People of African Descent, the Committee is planning to hold a thematic discussion on discrimination against people of African descent, with the participation of relevant United Nations bodies, programmes and specialized agencies. Human rights experts and members of civil society involved in the elimination of discrimination against people of African descent at the national and international levels will also be invited to attend as speakers.

31. The Committee would like to support measures to strengthen collaboration among the relevant organs, offices and mechanisms dealing with the question of racial discrimination, including discrimination targeting people of African descent. In this respect, the Committee would like to highlight cooperation between the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent and the Committee, with a view to institutionalizing mechanisms for mutual sharing of best practices. In this regard, two Committee members were able to participate in the ninth session of the Working Group, held in April 2010, through presentations and panel discussions.

32. With reference to General Assembly resolutions 62/122, 63/5 and 64/15 on the permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, the Committee supports the creation of a monument honouring the victims of the transatlantic slave trade. It also supports other appropriate measures to raise awareness of the International Year.

33. The Committee would like to encourage OHCHR to compile a fact sheet similar to fact sheet No. 9, on the rights of indigenous peoples, or No. 18, on minority rights, which would highlight, inter alia, the history of people of African descent, existing mechanisms for the promotion and protection of their rights, and the way ahead.

34. The Committee would also like to encourage OHCHR to develop educational and promotional material based on the aforementioned fact sheet and to make optimal use of its regional and country offices to hold regional seminars around the world. The Committee supports the engagement of OHCHR as a leading force behind the launch of an awareness-raising campaign in celebration of the International Year.

35. Finally, it should be noted that this is a preliminary contribution by the Committee and that it will engage in further discussions with a view to providing additional substantive contributions during its upcoming seventy-seventh session, in August 2010.

VI. Views and recommendations received from the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

36. In order to foster synergies, coordination and cooperation among the various mechanisms in place to address the question of racial discrimination, including discrimination targeting people of African descent, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance suggests that the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent include, at its tenth session, discussions with representatives of United Nations human rights mechanisms, such as members of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Independent Expert on minority issues and the Special Rapporteur.

37. The Special Rapporteur also suggests that representatives of regional human rights mechanisms be invited to take part in the tenth session of the Working Group. Such regional human rights mechanisms may include the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance.

38. These discussions would help to identify issues of concern faced by people of African descent in various parts of the world and, above all, would facilitate the exchange of best practices among these various human rights mechanisms. Best practices could cover national, regional and international initiatives, as well as laws and policies to protect the rights of all individuals affected by racism, including people of African descent. National and regional jurisprudence may also be presented and discussed within this context.

39. Finally, the Special Rapporteur recalls that while people of African descent have been formally recognized as victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the Durban outcome document, in paragraph 17 of that document, it is acknowledged that "all victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance should receive the same necessary attention and protection and accordingly appropriate treatment". Therefore, no hierarchy of victims should be established and the situation of people of African descent should be discussed from the wider perspective of racial discrimination against all individuals and groups of individuals, including people of African descent. Governments need to ensure that measures and policies designed to fight racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance also address the situation of people of African descent and that related mechanisms are accessible to them.

VII. Views and recommendations received from the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent

40. The Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent submitted a series of organizational and substantive proposals related to the International Year of People of African Descent, under the theme "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development".

41. The Working Group's organizational proposals are the following:

(a) That the International Year have the theme "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development" in order to draw attention to the critical thematic focus of the International Year;

(b) That the International Year be observed with the full involvement of all relevant United Nations bodies, programmes and specialized agencies, in particular UNESCO, the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund;

(c) That cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations be ensured in the context of the observance of the International Year at the regional level;

(d) That the relevant United Nations authority establish a voluntary fund, which would include an initial contribution from the United Nations regular budget, for the International Year and invite Member States and all relevant donors to make contributions so as to provide additional funding for activities related to the International Year, as well as follow-up activities, and to facilitate the participation of non-governmental organizations addressing issues related to people of African descent in such activities;

(e) That the Secretary-General appoint the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as coordinator of activities related to the International Year;

(f) That OHCHR ensure adequate media coverage of the International Year, including through a logo, posters, brochures and the establishment of a dedicated web space for the International Year;

(g) That a link be formally established between the International Year and the tenth anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action;

(h) That national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights be invited, through the International Coordinating Committees of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, to actively participate in the International Year, including by initiating relevant activities at the national level; and

(i) That the International Year be launched with an opening-day ceremony, to be held on 10 December 2010 during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

42. The Working Group's substantive proposals are the following:

(a) That the International Year be formally observed at the high-level segment of the sixteenth session of the Human Rights Council in a panel discussion;

(b) That an international day for people of African descent be declared after broad-based consultations with people of African descent; but that the date chosen be connected with an important date in Haitian history, in recognition of Haiti's key role in exposing discrimination against people of African descent and focusing on the concepts of human dignity and the right to freedom and justice for people of

African descent at the local, regional and global levels from 1791 to 1804 and beyond;

(c) That the Human Rights Council be invited to launch the process of formulating a declaration on people of African descent and give the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent a mandate to develop a draft text in this respect;

(d) That a high-level international conference on people of African descent be organized under the auspices of the General Assembly on the theme "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development", with the participation of Member States and all relevant specialized agencies, human rights treaty bodies, special procedure mandate holders and other stakeholders;

(e) That regional conferences be held in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and North America on topics related to the situation of people of African descent;

(f) That OHCHR organize side events on the situation of people of African descent during the regular sessions of the Human Rights Council in 2011;

(g) That a publication on the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, including a compilation of its recommendations, be produced as part of the OHCHR fact sheet series;

(h) That the participation of the maximum number of civil society representatives in activities organized for the International Year be encouraged and that an international network be created to facilitate exchanges of information among non-governmental organizations representing people of African descent;

(i) That arrival-point sites of memory be established in all countries to which Africans were relocated and which benefited from the transatlantic trade in Africans;

(j) That Governments be encouraged to include in their education activities awareness-raising events relating to the observance of the International Year, including through art competitions, cultural events, awards, academic events and films and documentaries, with a view to restoring the dignity of people of African descent;

(k) That Member States, United Nations agencies and regional organizations foster cultural links between the African diaspora and the African continent.

VIII. Views and recommendations received from other relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes

43. The following contribution was received from the Department of Public Information:

(a) General suggestions:

(i) Exhibitions: a mobile exhibition, displayed at Headquarters and other duty stations around the world, depicting the history and culture (music, food, religion) of people of African descent;

(ii) Website: a dedicated United Nations website with information on the cultural history and current situation of people of African descent;

(iii) Social media: a Facebook page and Twitter page for interactive communications;

(iv) Printed material: a poster commemorating the International Year and information products, such as brochures, pamphlets, etc.;

(v) Audio-visual: United Nations radio programmes and podcasts on the history and culture (music, food, religion) of people of African descent;

(vi) Video: a short documentary or B-roll on the history of people of African descent;

(b) Specific suggestions:

(i) Cultural event: a cultural event featuring local performance artists at Headquarters with a theme that highlights the presence of African descendants and culture across the globe;

(ii) Fair: the United Nations could also host a food and craft fair and invite appropriate Member States and local craftspeople and restaurants to participate, and organize a film or film series focused on the human and civil rights struggles of African descendants. The United Nations could also draw on the expertise of the New York African Film Festival for sponsorship or suggestions.

44. In this context, the Department of Public Information wishes to emphasize that the suggested activities could not be undertaken within existing resources.

45. In addition, the Department of Public Information sees an option for conducting the activities planned for 2011 in connection with the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade (General Assembly resolution 62/122) as part of the activities for the International Year.

46. The theme for the 2011 commemorations will be determined by the Commemoration Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is composed of the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, other senior staff of the Department of Public Information and representatives of the Caribbean Community and the African Group.

47. In 2010, the theme of the International Day was "Expressing our freedom through culture". This theme highlighted the importance of cultural heritage, passed down from generation to generation, as a medium for expressing and nurturing identity during the days of slavery and ultimately for celebrating freedom from slavery after 400 years of struggle.

48. During the week-long series of commemorative events, the Department organized a number of activities to raise awareness of the International Day. The 2010 programme consisted of the following events and activities:

- Afro-Caribbean music and food fair
- Film screening of *Slave Routes: Resistance, Abolition and Creative Progress*
- Exhibit under the theme "400 Years of Struggle: for freedom and culture"

- Non-governmental organizations briefing at Headquarters, including a panel discussion on the impact of cultural expression as a means of resistance to the transatlantic slave trade
- Special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly
- Press conference
- Student videoconference organized by the Department of Public Information in collaboration with UNESCO

49. A similar programme would be created for 2011.

IX. Draft programme of activities for the International Year for People of African Descent

50. Having considered the views and recommendations contained in the responses to the request for input on possible activities to mark the International Year for People of African Descent and mindful that United Nations agencies are encouraged by the General Assembly to carry out activities within existing resources, the following is a draft programme of activities for the International Year:[1]

A. Preliminary organizational issues

Theme of the International Year

51. The International Year should have the theme "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development" in order to draw attention to the critical thematic focus of the International Year.

Logo for the International Year

52. A logo should be created and used for all activities related to the International Year.

Establishment of a fund for the International Year

53. A voluntary fund, including an initial contribution from the United Nations regular budget, should be established for the International Year and Member States and all relevant donors should be invited to make contributions so as to provide additional funding for activities related to the International Year, as well as follow-up activities and to facilitate the participation of non-governmental organizations dealing with issues of people of African descent in such activities.

[1] The authors of the various proposals may be identified in sections III to XIII of the present report.

B. Activities

Opening ceremony

54. The International Year should be launched with an opening-day ceremony, to be held on 10 December 2010 during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

Slave Route Project

55. In order to portray the actual economic, social and political situation of peoples of African descent and stimulate debate on discriminatory patterns inherited from slavery, a publication should be launched on the topic, either as an extension of the Slave Route Project or through the creation of a group of experts. Other related activities may include the preparation and publication of maps, educational materials, films, public exhibitions and other initiatives under the Slave Route Project.

World Conference on People of African Descent

56. A world conference on people of African descent should be held to discuss their historic contribution to the creation of new societies in the places to which they were forcibly brought, and how their contribution is represented in different areas, such as politics, the labour market and the media. This conference should occur in parallel with an arts festival comprising dance and music performances, theatre, films and art exhibits, which would increase the visibility of this initiative.

International conference on people of African descent

57. A high-level international conference on people of African descent should be organized under the auspices of the General Assembly on the theme "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development", with the participation of Member States and all relevant specialized agencies, human rights treaty bodies, special procedure mandate holders and other stakeholders.

Regional conferences on people of African descent

58. Regional conferences should be held in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and North America on topics related to the situation of people of African descent.

Dissemination activities by States

59. Member States are encouraged to undertake the following awareness-raising activities:

(a) A comprehensive, national-level campaign involving mass media, forums, seminars and presentations on the International Year;

(b) Awareness-raising days focusing on social, economic and cultural issues related to people of African descent should be organized by universities, Government institutions and non-governmental organizations, with the assistance of experts on the subject matter.

Educational activities by States

60. States are encouraged to include in their education activities awareness-raising events relating to the observance of the International Year, including through art competitions, cultural events, awards, academic events and films and documentaries, with a view to restoring the dignity of people of African descent.

61. States are encouraged to create a study-grant programme for children and young people of African descent in order to guarantee their effective access to primary and secondary education.

Training for people of African descent

62. States should carry out education and training initiatives for social organizations and civil society to raise awareness of international instruments related to racism and racial discrimination.

Cultural exchanges

63. States should facilitate exchanges among leaders and sharing of leadership experiences between organizations of African descent at the regional and international levels.

International civil society network

64. An international network should be created to facilitate exchanges of information among non-governmental organizations representing people of African descent.

Publications on people of African descent

65. OHCHR should produce a publication on the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, including a compilation of its recommendations, as part of the OHCHR fact sheet series.

UNESCO conferences and forums

66. The conference being organized by UNESCO and Purdue University in April 2011 on philosophical dialogue between Africa and the Americas should be used to commemorate the International Year.

67. The theme of the 2011 UNESCO Youth Forum, held prior to the UNESCO General Conference, should be linked to the International Year.

UNESCO World Heritage programme

68. The UNESCO World Heritage programme should explore the possibility of a transboundary nomination of sites that are of outstanding universal value to people of African descent.

Forum on Minority Issues

69. The Forum on Minority Issues of the Human Rights Council should use its 2011 meeting to bring together academics and journalists to discuss the challenges facing people of African descent.

Goodwill Ambassador

70. The role of Goodwill Ambassador for the permanent memorial at the United Nations to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade should be highlighted through a side event or briefing during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly or at a session of the Human Rights Council.

Statements and opinion pieces relevant to the International Year

71. Throughout the course of the year, the High Commissioner for Human Rights should release statements and opinion pieces in order to raise awareness of the International Year and of the issues relevant to people of African descent.

International commemorative days

72. The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March) and the International Day for Tolerance (16 November) should be commemorated in the United Nations with activities focused on people of African descent. The Commemoration Steering Committee for the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade should be requested to connect the 2011 commemoration to the International Year and carry out activities that reflect that connection.

Exhibition at United Nations offices

73. A mobile exhibition should be displayed at Headquarters and other duty stations around the world depicting the history and culture (music, food, religion) of people of African descent.

Audio-visual information on the International Year

74. United Nations Radio should broadcast programmes and podcasts on the history and culture (music, food, religion) of people of African descent.

Cultural event at United Nations Headquarters

75. A cultural event featuring local performance artists should be held at Headquarters with a theme that highlights the presence of African descendants and culture across the globe.

Cuisine and craft fair at United Nations Headquarters

76. A cuisine and craft fair should be held at Headquarters, with appropriate Member States and local craftspeople and restaurants invited to participate.

Film series on people of African descent

77. The New York African Film Festival should be invited to collaborate on presenting a film series focused on the human and civil rights struggles of people of African descent.

Tenth session of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent

78. The tenth annual session of the Working Group should have the International Year for People of African Descent as its central theme. In order to foster synergies,

coordination and cooperation among the various mechanisms in place to address the question of racial discrimination, including discrimination targeting people of African descent, the Working Group should include, at its tenth session, discussions with representatives of United Nations human rights mechanisms, such as members of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Independent Expert on minority issues and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Representatives of regional human rights mechanisms should also be invited to take part in the tenth session of the Working Group. Such regional human rights mechanisms may include the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance.

Other activities of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent

79. The Working Group should conduct a mission to meet with representatives of international financial institutions to promote engagement in the International Year and commitments to activities carried out in that context.

Sessions of the Human Rights Council

80. The International Year for People of African Descent should be formally observed at the high-level segment of the sixteenth session of the Human Rights Council in a panel discussion.

81. OHCHR should organize side events on the situation of people of African descent during the regular sessions of the Human Rights Council in 2011.

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

82. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is encouraged to hold a thematic discussion on discrimination against people of African descent, with the participation of relevant United Nations bodies, programmes and specialized agencies.

International day for people of African descent

83. An International day for people of African descent should be declared after broad-based consultations with people of African descent; but the date chosen should be connected with an important date in Haitian history, in recognition of Haiti's fundamental role in exposing discrimination against people of African descent and focusing on the concepts of human dignity and the right to freedom and justice for people of African descent at the local, regional and global levels from 1791 to 1804 and beyond.

Arrival-point sites of memory

84. Arrival-point sites of memory should be established in all countries to which Africans were relocated and which benefited from the transatlantic trade in Africans.